The Garraf Massif is a mountain range located south of Barcelona along the Mediterranean coast between the towns Castelldefels and Sitges. Rocky and calcareous, the region is alternately wooded, and carpeted in wild herbs all centered around the Parc Natural Garraf. In this stony, rugged landscape, Carlos Esteva took a dilapidated family estate and turned it into one of the most dynamic properties in Penedès. Starting in 1979, Carlos began to restore his grandfather’s house and replant many of the vineyards and orchards. Now totaling 90ha of vineyards, 2ha of olive trees and 1 ha of almond trees, the farm has been organic since 2008 and has recently introduced biodynamic practices in some vineyards. The rugged, inhospitable landscape presents many varying microclimates which Carlos has taken advantage of by planting over 28 grapes varieties. The largest vineyard is only 2ha in size and while most of the vines were planted over the last thirty years, there is one old vineyard of Xarel.lo that dates to 1948.

The soils around Can Rafols dels Caus are comprised of decomposed dolomitic limestone with inclusions of ancient stones and fossils. The soil is shallow, free draining and poor in nutrients so even young vines are forced to root deep into the limestone bedrock below. To prevent erosion, Carlos only plows in the winter and encourages cover crops—mainly local varieties of nitrogen-fixing flora. The combination of its proximity to the Mediterranean and its elevation, Can Rafols enjoys plenty of warmth and sunshine as well as afternoon winds that moderate the heat and humidity of summer.
Harvested by hand, the fruit is quickly transported to a modern, energy-efficient cellar tunneled deep into the Dolomitic bedrock. Each parcel and grape variety is fermented separately with the whites seeing a short maceration before pressing and the reds receiving a cold maceration before fermentation. All fermentations are with indigenous yeasts. A mixture of stainless steel, French oak and chestnut are used during the elevage. Many cuvées are aged for an additional period of time after bottling so each wine is released when Carlos feels it is ready - and occasionally not in vintage order!

The flagship wine on the estate is the Gran Caus Tinto, made from Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon and aged in used French oak; combines the elegance of Bordeaux with the spice and herbal aromas of the Mediterranean. But perhaps where the real genius of Carlos becomes evident is with a trio of unique and DO-defining whites: La Calma, El Rocallis and Xarel.lo Pairal. With so many varieties and differing plots as well as vineyards in an adjacent property, Carlos makes close to twenty wines, still and sparkling in any given vintage.

**FACTS & FIGURES**

- **FOUNDED**
  1979

- **PROPRIETOR**
  Carlos Esteva

- **WINEMAKER**
  Carlos Esteva

- **SIZE**
  90 ha

- **ELEVATION**
  300–450 meters above sea level

- **SOILS**
  Clay limestone, chalk, gravel

- **VINE AGE**
  15–70

- **VARIETIES**
  Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Pinot Noir, Syrah, Tempranillo, Xarel.lo, Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc, Incrocio Manzoni, Macabeo, Moscatell, Parellada

- **FARMING**
  Practicing organic and biodynamic

- **HARVEST**
  Manual

- **CELLAR**
  Natural yeast fermentation in tank, barrel, or concrete, extended bottle aging before release